The Mysore Representative Assembly.

Dewan's Closing Remarks.

10th October 1922.

GENTLEMEN,

At this late hour, I do not propose to detain you longer than is necessary with any lengthy remarks on the business that has been conducted during the present session. Besides, during the discussions, I have, as far as possible, attempted to give the decision of Government on all the important questions that have been brought up. Nevertheless, I cannot altogether depart from past practice and will therefore briefly refer to a few of the most important questions which have engaged your attention and which have been pressed with considerable force before Government during the past few days.

The abolition of supari cess and the irrigation cess has been repeatedly urged before the Assembly. As regards the supari cess, I personally see the justice of the representation and can only repeat the assurance that I have already given that the Department of Agriculture will be consulted with a view to ascertain whether the annual expenditure incurred by it for the purpose of making experiments in regard *Koleroga*, etc., could not be met from the annual interest on the accumulated sum of the supari cess fund now to its credit in the Government Treasuries. Although the total sum realized throughout the whole State under supari cess is about Rs. 27,000; still, I consider that the principle of its incidence both in the malnad and the maidan requires re-examination. Taking the subject as a whole, I am inclined to view with favour the representation that the supari cess as a separate cess should be abolished and that the Department of Agriculture whose duty it is in course of its ordinary work to help the supari growers with advice and the necessary remedies against causes that interfere with supari cultivation, should do all that is needful in this direction without the levy of an additional tax.

The irrigation cess has already been abolished in so far as all taluks which are to be settled hereafter are concerned. But the question of giving retrospective effect to the order will involve considerable confusion in the revenue accounts and after all, even in regard to those taluks, the

wet assessment was fixed after taking into consideration the levy of the irrigation cess as a separate levy.

The restriction placed against the cultivation of cardamom on all coffee lands by the order of Government dated 23rd May 1922 has been very ably criticised by Mr. Venkatesiah and I think his arguments are convincing. I agree that there is no justification for placing any such restrictions on all the old grants and the orders to that extent will be modified. Even as regards fresh grants for coffee, the necessity for imposing such a restriction will be further examined.

I have been impressed with the very strong representations that have been made by the representatives from the malnad in regard to the question of re-settlements recently introduced in some of the taluks in that area. I must however, in this connection, repudiate the attacks that have been made against the Superintendent of Survey and his department which I presume must have been made owing to ignorance of the facts. The departmental view is that the raiyats have got every opportunity given to them to represent hardships arising in individual cases and that the Superintendent hears all such cases and passes orders himself. But the raiyats' point of view is that when a certain percentage of increase is fixed, the department automatically and rigidly adheres to that increase making it applicable to all cases irrespective of the difference under classification and other local conditions. Whatever may be the truth in the complaints that have been made, it seems necessary that some investigation should be ordered by Government in regard to the manner in which the re-settlement operations have been conducted in these taluks. During the course of my promised tour in the malnad, I undertake to hold a personal enquiry into this matter and I shall make the necessary local investigations and also examine the settlement records to see how far it has any justification. I however want to impress upon you one aspect of the question. The re-settlements have been delayed in most of these cases for over a decade. The raiyats have benefited by the continuance of the old settlement rates which were liable to be revised under the re-survey classification many many years ago. The Government, I can assure you, have no desire to benefit the exchequer owing to financial stringency at the expense of the raiyat or to prejudice his interests so far as his liability to pay higher assessment is concerned simply to increase beyond a legitimate and permissible rate his liability for assessment on the land he holds under Government. The orders passed

on the re-settlement reports have gone into all the questions which according to settlement practice have to be taken into consideration in fixing the average rate of maximum and minimum of the different classes of lands under wet and dry. In view, however, of the general dissatisfaction that has been brought to notice during the discussions on this large question, I have deemed it necessary to give a personal assurance that I shall look into the matter during my visit to your part of the country.

Strong representations have been made in regard to the extension of grazing facilities and removing certain hardships in regard to the enforcement of the grazing fee rules in certain districts. It is urged that the privilege of grazing in district jungles should be extended to the limits of the State Forests where the district forests have got no scope for grazing and the State Forests themselves have really no justification, by virtue of the nature of the forest growth standing thereon, for being retained as such. During my recent tour I have come across instances in which the villagers have good reason to complain that they have not adequate grazing facilities, chiefly because of the reservation of certain areas as State Forests which really serve no useful purpose as such and owing to which the village cattle are deprived of the minimum grazing that is available in the locality. The Conservator of Forests, I understand, is agreeable to any reasonable proposal for the disafforestation of such areas and for releasing them for yillage cattle. Government will be glad to issue necessary instructions in the matter after the report of the Committee recently appointed to go into the whole question of grazing facilities is received. I admit that the whole subject requires careful examination.

In regard to Judicial Reforms, there is a general feeling that the Mysore State has not got sufficient number of civil courts for the disposal of civil litigation, It has also been suggested that the revenue derived from the courts should be wholly spent for the judicial machinery established to cope with the work, and the existing congestion of work in the Munsiffs' Courts is urged as a ground in support not only of the establishment of more courts as a matter of urgency but also in support of the general complaint of inadequacy of the existing machinery. These questions will be referred to the Chief Court for a detailed report; and after comparison with the figures in the different Provinces of British India with reference to population, area and the total civil litigation dealt with, the Government will be prepared to consider the question

from the point of view now put before them, and if a case is made out for the establishment of a few more civil courts, I shall see that it is taken up for favourable consideration at a very early date.

Improvement in the morale of the Police administration has been urged by several speakers in this Assembly; and particular stress has been laid on the system of recruitment of police officers such as Police Inspectors and Superintendents. A few have spoken, in preference, of a system of direct recruitment and many have laid stress on the questions of status as well as pay. These, gentlemen, are matters of considerable importance to the general administration and I promise to look into them.

There has been much discussion on the Education Memorandum as usual. But I need hardly on the present occasion refer to it in detail, because most of the points urged have been covered and fully dealt with in my opening speech before this Assembly. Government are fully aware of the defects in the present system of education. They have indicated with great precision the reforms that are needed to rectify them. But they all involve a large expenditure and as explained by me, the Government have not been able to lay their hands on the additional resources that they counted upon to bring into effect the orders on the Education Memorandum. I however entertain the hope that during the year 1923-24, that is, with effect from 1st July next year, we shall be able to make a good start.

This is the first time, so far as I remember, that a very large number of railway grievances have been brought forward for the consideration of Government. The question of railway fares and the removal of discomforts to the third class passengers are matters of more or less universal application throughout India and the Mysore State Railways cannot be charged with any undue or special neglect in these matters. I have already in my opening speech pointed out the handicaps under which the open line administration of our railways is now conducted and indicated the very large expenditure that will have to be met during the next five years to bring our railway system to a safe and up-to-date standard, adequate to meet all modern requirements. Some of the local grievances in regard to railways will be referred to the Secretary and Agent for enquiry and report. But I would like to give this assurance that the Government are fully alive to the necessity of improving the administration of the railways and that as it is one of the 12 subjects which I have taken up for special study, I hope it will be possible to anticipate

that the wants of the people will be appreciably met in the near future and the efficiency of the railway administration will show a decided improvement.

As regards the appointment of a Railway Advisory Board, I can only refer to my announcement regarding the appointment of Standing Advisory Committees, which fully provides for an organization of the kind suggested in the representation.

I have already made a statement in regard to the general discussions that have taken place on the draft Press Regulation and it is not necessary for me to repeat what I have already stated on the subject.

As regards the constitutional developments announced by me by command of His Highness on Saturday last, I need say but little. These changes will involve considerable additional expenditure. This is not, in my humble opinion, the time to discuss the merits of the scheme that His Highness has been pleased to sanction for the liberalization of his administration on the lines generally indicated. No scheme, however perfect, can please everybody. All I desire to impress upon you is that so far as His Highness' Government is concerned, every shade of opinion expressed has been carefully weighed and considered and that they have reason to believe that the scheme will receive the enthusiastic support of the whole moderate opinion of Mysore. I am myself fully confident that with the political insight and sagacity which the people of Mysore possess in a marked degree, they will recognise that Mysore history and Mysore traditions and above all the absolute solidarity of interest between the Ruler and the ruled that exists in the State, point to a path of progress and healthy evolution on the lines now announced and that they will appeal to one and all as the measure of advancement in constitutional progress that is indicated by our present conditions and limitations. It remains now entirely for the people at large to show their genuine appreciation and gratitude for the substantial advance that has been inaugurated in the difficult problem of re-modelling the constitutional machinery of Government with the generous policy of granting extended privileges and wider powers to the representatives of the people, and to work together harmoniously to make the new dispensation of His Highness the Maharaja a complete and unqualified success. I will submit your representations that were just now read out, to His Highness the Maharaja for his gracious consideration.

In concluding this session which will ever remain the most memorable in the annals of your Assembly, I wish you all a pleasant and safe return to your homes. A word

of thanks is due from me for the very splendid temper the Assembly has shown during the discussions on several controversial subjects. You will also, I hope, forgive me if I have applied the rules of closure on certain occasions against individual members or on a subject as a whole. I can assure you that I have done it with the best of intentions, the chief aim being to get through the business without in any way curtailing the liberty of speech. I appreciate highly the spirit with which my rulings were accepted by one all and thank you sincerely for helping me to conduct this Assembly. We shall meet on the next occasion, I hope, under entirely different conditions and an atmosphere, freer, better organized and better equipped for the true expression of public opinion which, in the words of a recent writer, springs from "a perfect environment where the innate good-will and instinctive statesmanship of every man could be translated into action."

Before we close, I wish to announce that His Highness the Maharaja has been pleased to approve of the constitution of the mixed committee of officials and non-officials to go into all the details connected with the scheme of the constitutional developments in Mysore, as follows:—

Chairman.

Dr. Brajendranath Seal, M.A., PH.D., D.SC.

Official Members.

Mr. K. R. Sreenivasa Iyengar, Revenue Commissioner.
Mr. K. Chandy, Excise Commissioner.
Rajakaryaprasakta M. N. Krishna Rao, Financial Secretary to Government.
Mr. K. Matthan, Chief Secretary to Government.
Mr. V. R. Thyagaraja Iyer, Officer to be put on special duty for reforms and *Ex-officio* Secretary to the Committee.

Non-Official Members.

Rajasabhabhushana Dewan Bahadur K. P. Puttanna Chetty, C.I.E.
Mr. B. V. Ramaswamy Chetty.
Mr. S. Venkatesaiya.
Mr. M. Subbaiya.
Mr. Md. Abbas Khan.
Mr. C. Srinivasa Rao.

These will constitute the Committee and the necessary notification will be issued so that they may commence their duties almost immediately.

Gentlemen, the session is over.

A. R. BANERJI,
Dewan of Mysore.